

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

January 17, 2007

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Human Services office

PRESENT: Douglas Sweet –Acting Chair, Jane Brown, Rob Caruso, Lucie Chansky, Herb Cole, Jini Fairley, Linda Hiller, Rosemary Larking, Barbara Lischinsky, Jason Rosenberg, Janna Zwerner
REGRETS: Girard Plante
STAFF: Beverly Droz, Lowell Haynes
GUESTS: Jeff Hutter, Heather Platt from Carroll Center for the Blind

The meeting was preceded by the annual holiday pizza party (postponed from Dec.) Introductions had been made and Jason's quest, Jeff Hutter, was welcomed. The meeting was called to order at 7:20 pm and was chaired by Douglas Sweet, Acting Chairperson. The agenda was reviewed and we started with an update on the Fair Housing Task Force.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF) update:

Barbara reported that the press conference about the Disabilities Audit was held on Jan. 16 with the Mayor, FHTF representatives, and Barbara and Doug attended. The FHTF will continue to meet monthly and plans continuing trainings with realtors regarding these issues. The FHIP grant received by Newton Housing Office will help with education, outreach and training. April is fair housing month and we'll have an event to educate the public about the disabilities audit and the Fair Housing action plan.

Doug mentioned that he, Barbara and Bev met with the Mayor over a week ago when Henry Korman and FHTF reps presented the disabilities audit to him. The Mayor was very supportive. Barbara said the Mayor was glad that CDBG funds had been available for these endeavors. As we recall, the City put up \$25K to do this audit.

Lowell mentioned that the article in today's Newton TAB did not mention the MCPD. Janna said that the fact that Newton scrutinized itself should be more publicized to the Globe, state agencies, independent living centers and more. Jason said we need some way of communicating both in response to things like this and maybe an ongoing newsletter. The Committee discussed where the audit should be publicized; Doug reminded the group that the audit is the purview of the FHTF and we should consult with them first. Barbara agreed and added that Henry would be in full favor of helping with publicity. Janna will draft a release for Barbara to show Henry and the Mayor's office.

Doug asked what is planned in addition to April's event. Bev explained that the FHIP grant covers training for staff, realtors and lenders over a period of time. She'll be attending a staff training 1/29/07. Since the grant includes 14 communities in a Metro West Consortium, there will be staff representatives from Newton and other communities. Jason would like to attend since he works with lenders and bankers, and is interested. Bev will check with Trisha Guditz in the Housing Office.

Jason suggested we should get all the email addresses of various agencies. Jini is connected by list serve with many of them. Doug said we should persist with outreach since conducting this audit was a major achievement.

The Committee recognized Barbara for her work with the FHTF and offered sympathies to her on the death of her mother.

Minutes of 12/18/06 were accepted with one change: In the Disabilities Audit report, under treatment of paired testers, it should read their credit (not credit card) was checked.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Café St. Petersburg (53-57 Union Street):

Rosemary stated that the Ride leaves her for 2 hours so she goes around Newton Centre while she's waiting. She reported that at Café St. Petersburg, there is a problem with the lift. There is no call button. There were boxes at the bottom of the stairs. She had called Lowell a few months ago but there's still no button; he had called the restaurant. The café has had dockets before the Architectural Access Board and has a hearing with them in February.

Jason said if there are items blocking the stairs then it is a violation of fire and building code. It should be brought to the appropriate city staff's attention such as Bruce Proia at the Fire Dept. and John Lojek in Inspectional Services. Doug asked Bev to notify these people.

Snow Report:

Doug said there is nothing new to report. If members see violations of snow on curb cut areas, let Lowell know and he'll call Steve Tocci.

CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT for January by Lowell

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Any discussion that took place at the meeting, other than Lowell's reading of the report, is noted below each appropriate bullet item and will start with the words "It was noted".

• Active Projects:

- Police Headquarters Annex Access Ramp (Project CD0203A. Expended, \$245,218; Budget balance, \$5,331; Building Dept. budget, \$66,600) – On our final inspection, we found two areas of work that need corrections. The railings need some minor corrections and the concrete surface of the ramp needs to be torn up and re-poured. There were a number of places on the surface of the ramp that exceeded the maximum slope allowance. The work may not be completed until we have consistently warmer weather. (EDC: April 2007)

It was noted that since there were places where the ramp surface slope exceeds the maximum. The whole ramp has to be torn up and re-paved. It can't be done until warm weather. Unfortunately there was no oversight during construction to be sure that the slope was uniformly correct. Jason asked Lowell to email Bev with expectations so we'll have it in writing.(EDC: April 2007)

- Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Projects CD0203B and CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$14,386) – No change since last report. We will be trying to work with the Traffic Engineer for the next few months to improve the pedestrian crossing at Centre Street @ Centre Ave. (EDC: fall 2007).

It was noted that Heather got Clint Schuckel to attend Carroll Center's class and meet with them. They addressed APS issues and that Centre St and Centre Ave is still a problem. We'll continue to request Cabot and Walnut streets. Clint said he'd check Beacon and Centre Streets which has an extremely short pedestrian crossing time.

- Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$10,000) – No change since last report. Our project is an asphalt walkway to provide an accessible route from the park entrance to some benches and to the basketball and tennis courts. DPW will do the work. The work has been delayed because of disagreement among residents regarding the location of additional walkways through the park that are to be funded by the City's CPA budget. The project will be completed in the spring. (EDC: spring 2007)
- Ware's Cove Accessible Connector Path (Project CD0403A. Expended, \$8,562; Budget balance, \$10,178) – Construction is almost completed on the accessible path from the field house to the recently constructed accessible path that starts north of the playground and runs almost to Purgatory Cove. The new path passes east of the children's play area. A few locations in the path need minor improvements and these will be made in the spring. (EDC: May 2007)
- Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$3,000) – No change since last report. The current budget will be limited to installation of benches at Wellington Park when our construction of walkways in the park is completed. (EDC: summer 2007)
- Curb Cuts (Project CD0703D. Expended, \$37,482; Budget balance: \$106,747) – The Dept. of Public Works has ended its curb cut work for the summer on the designated sites between Parker Street and Newton South High School. In the spring, they will begin work on the next phase of this project, which includes 40 new curb cut locations. The majority of the new locations are on Woodland Road from Hancock Street to Windermere Road. Mayor's Committee members are still encouraged to report priority locations for needed curb cuts. (Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.)
It was noted that Lowell is looking at many new sites. Any complaints should go to Lowell. The goal is to make a full list to present to Department of Public Works (DPW) so when they are able to start construction they'll know where to go. DPW is now doing all the curb cuts and will use the truncated dome texture on the concrete that they pour.
There was discussion of the type of texture used at Bloomingdale's and Rob noted that he found that particular type dangerous to his wheel chair. Lowell will bring this up with John Lojek, although we know it's acceptable to AAB.
- School Administration Building Access Improvements (Project CD0603A. Expended, \$21,538; Budget balance, \$12,169) – This project is almost complete. DPW has reconstructed the old stairs near Walnut Street and we have ordered the installation of new railings. (EDC: December 2006)
- Public Facilities and Parks Access (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$67,293) – The Mayor's Committee has voted to include funds for increased accessibility in Newton parks in the current year plan. The one plan that has been presented and approved is for \$30,000 to construct an accessible route from the Mason-Rice School parking lot to the planned accessible play area within the Newton Centre Playground. The project will be managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and carried out by the Department of Public Works. A proposed second part of this project is the re-construction of two sets of stairs in Burr Park and the installation of railings on all three sets of stairs in the park. We are awaiting an estimate from DPW for the cost of re-constructing the stairs. The estimate for railings for the two sets of stairs off Park Street is \$2,243.60 and the estimate for railings for the large set of stairs near Arlington Street is \$3,140.81. If the Mayor's Committee recommends proceeding with stair re-construction, the work will be done in the spring. (EDC: October 2007)

- **Projects near completion:**
Police Headquarters Annex accessible ramp and entrance,
Ware's Cove connector path,
School Administration Building accessible entrance.

OLD or NEW BUSINESS:

Census:

Lucie reported that information for people to access the disabilities 9-1-1 form made it onto the Census on the back page.

NNHS Accessibility:

Lucie was concerned about the accessibility issues of NNHS. Nick Parnell returned her call and said the HP spaces are appropriately placed. There are four elevators including one in the gym and they all have to meet all accessibility codes. He said nothing is in stone and it will come before the Committee.

HP Parking & AAB Regulations:

Rob asked if we could petition the AAB that they change their regulations and put a symbol and "no parking" on the striped access area next to the HP space. The law still stands that it's legal to park in those areas, although Senator Creem has re-introduced the bill to make it illegal.

Emergency Preparedness:

Jini reported that her Emergency Preparedness sub-committee continues to strategize and work with Public Health on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. On 1/19/07 at 1-3pm at the Natick Library all Commissions have been invited to share and discuss these issues but Jini is unable to attend. There's a larger meeting on 2/22/07.

Upcoming Meetings:

Meeting dates for school vacation week were discussed again. The Committee changed the February meeting to Monday 2/12/07 and the April meeting to Monday 4/9/07. Bev will have it re-scheduled in the clerk's office and prepare new building-use permit forms.

The Committee made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 pm.

The next meeting will be Monday, February 12 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.